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THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Written statement*/ submitted by the International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 January 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English, French and Spanish from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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ENG

Development includes the eradication of poverty

01. "We should all benefit from globalization: eliminate poverty and hunger in the world, establish peace in the world, ensure the protection and promotion of human rights at world level, ensure the protection of the environment, implement social norms on working places all around the world... It can only be done if world companies, financial and trade international organisations and governments are submitted to an efficient democratic control by peoples". (Extract from the document titled "We, the People - Forum of the Millennium", declaration and action programme of NGO's from more than 100 countries, presented before the headquarters of the UNO in New York from 22 to 26 May, 2000).

02. "All the forms of poverty are the most important challenge that the international community has to face. A specific cause of that concern is the 1.2 billion human beings that have less than one dollar a day to live and the 1.6 billion that have less than two dollars a day. Progress in that respect necessarily includes the definition of objectives for fighting poverty. Resulting from the big world conferences and summits that were organized by the UNO in the 90's, the development objectives presented hereafter are general objectives for the whole world. They aim at some of the numerous aspects of poverty and its effects on the lives of human beings. By accepting them, the international community commits itself towards the poorest and most vulnerable people of the world - and also vis-à-vis itself". (Extract from "A better world for all": common report of the UNO, the IMF, the WB and the OECD, presented by Secretary general of the UNO Mr. Kofi Annan in the 24th special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Geneva from 26 to 30 June, 2000).

The causes of bad development

03. The member movements of the FIMARC subscribe to those objectives of the fight against poverty but lay as a prior issue the causes of that growing poverty. They will keep on questioning the efficiency of the programmes for fighting poverty if there are no structural changes at the level of world policies.

04. Health, education, human rights... have to be dealt with in direct connexion with social development. In our globalized society, most questions are interconnected and cannot be dealt with with sectoral approaches. Social and economic developments are a whole and development policies have to be thought in those logics.

05. Many years ago, the bodies of the United Nations and NGOs added that optic to the way they considered development. The social summit of Copenhagen in 1995 was full of hope regarding the progress towards the eradication of poverty and the progress towards the realization of the right to development.

06. Five years later, in June 2000, in the "Geneva 2000" Forum, we had no choice but to notice that the expected progress was far from being made and some people talked about Copenhagen -5 to express the drop of development instead of Copenhagen +5 that should have been able to state the progress in that respect.

07. Nevertheless, civil society in its whole is more and more mobilizing for more social justice and, consequently, for a better access to development for all. The failure of the Seattle negotiations in December 1999, all the so-called "anti-globalization" events and the counter-summit of Davos in Porto Alegre in January 2001, clearly show society's concern about a better distribution of wealth and about slowing down the frenetic race for profit as well as the claims for the protection of natural resources.

08. The World Bank, noting those difficulties around the world, also added to its priorities the struggle for the reduction of poverty. In the framework of their strategies for fighting poverty, the WB and the IMF created an instrument - the IDF - Integrated Development Framework - that implies that countries should take care of their own development plans, plans that would be supported by partners between countries, backers, civil society, the private sector and other actors of development...

The right to the realization of a... harmonious development

09. In the society context, the movements of the FIMARC reassert their convictions:

- for an harmonious development that respects the dignity of Human beings and nature
- for an agriculture that respects the environment,
- for a regulated market and not a hostile free-trade that causes so many disparities and the phenomenon of debt that we know,
- for the annulment of the debt and, consequently, the investment of the money in development, health, schooling... policies,
- for mankind to become a world family built on democratic principles and that respects the diversity of cultures.

All those are preconditions for a harmonious development...

What policies for what development?

10. In their last meeting in November 2000, the members of the Executive committee of the FIMARC and experts of the WB and the WTO analysed the impacts of financial institutions on food sovereignty, the first condition of development, and they want to reaffirm the critical stand vis-à-vis the policies carried out by those international authorities:

- underlining the paradox that poverty is a new condition for the international financial aid when, for years - and it continues - those countries have suffered from the negative effects of those structural adjustment programmes, imposed by the same financial bodies,

- highlighting the contradiction between those international bodies that on the one hand dedicate funds to development (the World Bank's Programme for fighting poverty) and on the other continue to destructure the regional markets and the world economy (the policies and negotiations of the WTO aiming at liberalizing a maximum number of products),

- denouncing those policies, which lead to more and more precarious economic situations for many rural people, in the South and in the North, and to displacements of people, withdrawals of populations, to more and more fundamentalism, fascism and destroy all hopes of development,

- criticizing the structural adjustment programmes imposed on developing countries that cause the enormous debts of some countries; without measures for the annulment of that unfair and so many times repaid debt, no development programmes will really bear fruits.

The FIMARC calls on to the States

11. The FIMARC is present in many member countries of the WTO, the WB and the IMF. Fortified by the experience of rural people and its analysis of the current globalization, the FIMARC asks the States to be vigilant vis-à-vis the proposals from international financial bodies on the strategies for fighting poverty.

12. The FIMARC is delighted with the initiative of the United Nations to organize "Financing for Development" and will take part to that event in order to reassert its conception and its desire to promote a model of development, putting Man at the centre of concerns, allowing this way to have the Right to Development progress.